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INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

TRENDS IN TRADE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE USSR AND THE FREE WORLD

CIA/RR IM-388 16 July 1954

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CIA/RR IM-388 (ORR Project 42.331)

<u>S-E-C-R-E-T</u>

TRENDS IN TRADE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE USSR AND THE FREE WORLD

Summary

In its trade with the Free World the USSR has traditionally exchanged its primary products for capital goods and industrial raw materials. After 1950 the composition of Soviet imports from the Free World tended to shift from capital goods to somewhat larger proportions of food and industrial raw materials. This shift may be explained by a combination of factors, including an imposition of trade controls by the West, increased domestic production of capital goods formerly imported, increased intra-Bloc trade, and, more recently, the announced emphasis on consumer goods imports.

During the past year the USSR has continually pointed out its intentions of increasing imports of consumer goods. An analysis of incomplete data** indicates that the USSR does intend to purchase increased amounts of consumer goods, mainly food. Trade agreements and known orders, however, indicate a continuing desire on the part of the USSR to secure a wide variety of capital goods from the Free World. In the foreseeable future the USSR apparently does not intend to increase imports of consumer goods at the expense of the procurement of capital goods abroad. The relative scarcity in the Soviet import program of both manufactured consumer goods and capital equipment destined for use in consumer goods industries confirms the view that the USSR intends to implement its consumer goods program only marginally through imports from the Free World.

^{*} The estimates and conclusions contained in this report represent the best judgment of the responsible analyst as of 10 June 1954.

** Complete data on commodity composition of trade with the Bloc are not available for the period after 1 July 1953.

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I. Introduction.

Since 1950 the percentage of value of food products and industrial raw materials imported by the USSR from the Free World has increased, while the percentage of value of machinery and transport equipment has declined. (See the Chart* and Table 1**.) These figures, however, should be used with caution. First, the value of total imports increased by 60 percent between 1950 and 1952. Consequently, although the percentage of total Soviet imports of machinery and transport equipment dropped from 41 percent to 27 percent from 1950 to 1952, the dollar value of the machinery and transport equipment imported remained about the same during that period. Second, the price increases between 1950 and 1952, especially in basic food and industrial raw materials, would mean that Soviet imports of these categories, although increasing in dollar value, would not have shown a proportionate increase in physical terms.

In fact, after allowing for price level increases, it is probable that the recent physical level of Soviet food imports is not substantially in excess of the immediate prewar average. In addition, the area and population being served today is substantially larger than the prewar Soviet area and population, so that the present per capita physical volume of food imports is not likely to be in excess of prewar levels.

Soviet exports to the West during 1950-52 followed a relatively constant pattern. Food, wood, and furs, in that order, as shown in Table 2***, were the most important items in terms of current value exported by the USSR in this period. Food exports increased each year, while wood and furs, though maintaining their positions relative to each other, claimed a smaller percentage of the total yearly export. Incomplete data for 1953-54 indicate that although traditional exports continue at a high level, the exports of mineral fuels -- especially coal and petroleum products -- have been increasing.

Events subsequent to the death of Stalin on 5 March 1953 offer no firm basis for a belief that Soviet foreign trade policy has undergone a fundamental change. It appears that the trade policy is geared

^{*} Following p. 2.

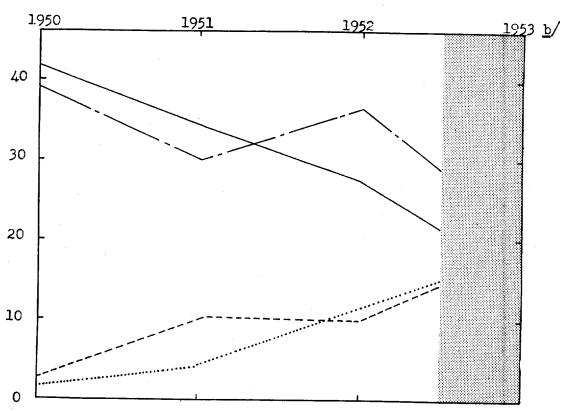
^{**} Table 1 follows on p. 3.

^{***} Table 2 follows on p. 4.

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CHART

Percentage Distribution &/of Major Soviet Imports from the Free World 1950-53



- a. Based on current value, Tables 1 and 2.
- b. First 6 months only.

Machinery and Transport Equipment

Rubber, Textiles, and Manufactures

Food

Wood, Cork, and Manufactures

Complete Information Unavailable

General Commodity Composition of Soviet Imports from the Free World $\underline{1}/$ 1950-53

Table 1

							Thousand Current US	rrent US \$	
	1950	20	1951	1.1	1952	25	1953 (first half)	t half)	
Commodities	Value	Percent of Total	Value	Percent of Total	Value	Percent of Total	Value	rercent of Total	
Food Beverages and Tobacco Fats and Oils	10,469 603 4,854	3.5 1.6	40,266 7,968 7,774	10.4 2.0	48,182 3,541 5,718	10.0 0.7 1.2	22,928 1,334 2,079	14.2 0.8 1.3	
Miscellaneous Inedible Crude Materials and Manufactures (Including Furs) Rubber and Manufactures Mood, Cork, and Manufactures Manufactures	1,351 45,833 6,748	0.4 15.2 2.2 8.5 8.5 8.5	5,459 80,328 22,641 36,158	100 7.09 7.09 7.09	2,060 100,918 51,772 69,540	0.4 21.0 10.8 14.5	343 16,936 23,379 30,359	0.0 10.7 18.7 18.4	
Fertilizers Nonmetallic Minerals and Manufactures	200 A	0.1	261 261	0.1	0 20	৹ঐ	08	० वे।	
Iron and Steel Manufactures	11,238	3.7	9,150	4.5	12,280	9.0	988,9	4.3	
Nonferrous Ores, Metals, and Manufactures	10,077	3.3	5,423	1.4	2,146	ካ• 0	1,983	1.2	
Chemicals	2,276	0.8	3,252	9.0	6,179	1.3	2,348	1.5	
Machinery Iransport Equi pme nt	86,795 36,050	28.8 12.0	56,533 66,456	17.3	55,570 73,694	11.7	14,937 21,917	9.3 13.6	
Miscellaneous and Unspecified	16,232	5.4	35,781	9.5	47,914	10.0	15,709	8.6	
Total Commodities Imported	301,413	100.0	387,466	100.0	479,593	100.0	161,158	100.0	

Footnote references in arabic numerals are to sources listed in the Appendix. Less than one-tenth of 1 percent. a. o.

Table 2

General Commodity Composition of Soviet Exports to the Free World 2/ 1950-53

							Thousand Current US	rrent US \$
	7	1950	1951	51	1952	52	1953 (first half	st half)
Commodities	Value	Percent of Total	Value	Percent of Total	Value	Percent of Total	Value	Percent of Total
Food Beverages and Tobacco Fats and Oils	112,059 2,738 142	1.1	189,981 2,346 10	47.9 0.6 <u>8</u>	291,657 1,131 6	63.1 0.2 <u>a</u>	82,217 392 786	59.0 0.3 0.6
Miscellaneous Inedible Crude Material and Manufactures		,	١		-		-	ć
(Including Furs)	41,399	16.4 a/	57,706	14.6 ā,′	42,347	ળ જે	10,949 0	7. 20
Wood, Cork, and Manufactures Textile Fibers and Manufactures	43,492	17.3.	65,197	16.4 6.1	16,290 18,093	10. 1. 0.	10,531	7.6
Fertilizers Nonmetallic Minerals and Manufactures	4,286 12,465	F-6.4	2,493	5.3	5,030 32,138	6.19	2,555 12,282	8.8 8.8
Iron and Steel Manufactures	3,931	1.6	6,184	1.6	10,759	2.3	3,149	2.3
Nonferrous Ores, Metals, and Manufactures	9,636	5.6	2,339	9.0	4,974	1.1	1,682	1.2
Chemicals	3,879	1.5	1 78,4	1.2	4,358	6.0	2,197	1.6
Machinery Transport Equipment	402 1,337	0.2	362 1,280	0.1	334 1,347	0.1	254 1,077	00 00
Miscellaneous and Unspecified	049,6	3.8	18,737	1.4	3,878	0.8	1,857	1.3
Total Commodities Exported	252,007	100.0	396,666	100.0	462,343	100.0	139,397	100.0

a. Less than one-tenth of 1 percent.

to economic self-sufficiency and political advantage and has remained the same even though some shifts in trade tactics have been evidenced since the coming to power of the Malenkov regime.

II. Consumer Goods Program.

The emergence of the consumer goods program in the USSR has afforded the Kremlin a unique opportunity to introduce a new aspect into the field of foreign trade. By playing up the USSR as a market for Free World consumer goods, the Kremlin has attempted to focus the attention of businessmen on the gains to be made from trade with the USSR and at the same time has attempted to deemphasize continued Soviet efforts to procure strategic items from the Free World.

A study of European newspapers, reports of Soviet negotiations with Western businessmen, and trade discussions at the recent meetings of the Economic Commission for Europe of the United Nations in Geneva leads to the conclusion that the USSR is stressing the consumer goods aspect of its trade in propaganda, but in business negotiations it continues to emphasize capital goods procurement. Recent debate in the British Parliament brought out the fact that very few Soviet orders for consumer goods were on British books. 3/ The Parliament's East-West trade debates therefore centered around the potential contribution of Soviet orders to the British capital goods industry. 4/

It is likely that the Free World has been facing a well-planned Soviet trade offensive, built around propaganda to the effect that Soviet consumer goods imports would help the Free World out of an incipient depression, but this propaganda really is intended to provide further incentive toward the relaxation or elimination of Free World trade controls. The current Soviet trade campaign, combined with frequent sales and more frequent offers of gold payment, has been extremely successful in gaining Free World adherents for the relaxation of trade controls.

III. Trade Agreements and Reported Orders.

A larger number of Soviet trade agreements with the Free World were signed in 1953 than during any other recent year. In these agreements, and in other trade contracts, the USSR has indicated a

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willingness to spend more on consumer goods, primarily various foodstuffs (butter, fish, meat, and fruit) and textiles. Another interesting aspect is the increase in Soviet emphasis on the procurement of Western industrial equipment for the manufacture of consumer goods, as evidenced in trade negotiations between the USSR and the UK, Belgium, and Sweden.

By and large the countries from which consumer goods are to be imported continue to serve as areas of supply for capital equipment. Thus planned Soviet imports of Danish, Belgian, Dutch, French, Swedish, and Italian foodstuffs and/cr textiles will also be accompanied by Soviet imports of refrigerator and cargo ships, floating cranes, tankers, various other types of vessels, electric power equipment, and other heavy industrial equipment.

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Any substantial implementation of such a volume of imports by the USSR would be significant, particularly since most of the goods are now subject to some type of Free World trade control. Table 3* shows that total Soviet imports from the UK in 1952 and 1953 were US \$105 million and US \$34 million, respectively. As the second largest trading partner of the USSR in 1953, Britain plays a major role in Soviet trade with the Free World.

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^{*} Table 3 follows on p. 7.

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Table 3 Soviet Imports from the Free World 1952-53 $\frac{8}{2}$

			Thousand (Current US \$
	19	52	19	953
	Value	Percent of Total	Value	Percent of Total
US	20	<u>a</u> /*	19	a/
Europe			. · · · ·	. -
Austria Belgium-Luxembourg Denmark France West Germany Greece Iceland Italy Netherlands Norway Portugal Sweden Switzerland Turkey	324 14,843 12,465 6,453 151 21 0 20,382 4,862 10,252 5,915 44,446 2,442 2,368	0.1 3.1 2.6 1.3 a/ 0 4.2 1.0 2.1 1.2 9.2 0.5	1,500 16,537 20,890 16,047 1,672 1,802 5,485 23,080 22,676 15,112 4,596 21,800 2,898 882 <u>b</u> /	0.4 4.0 5.1 3.9 0.4 0.4 1.3 5.6 5.5 3.7 1.1 5.3 0.7
UK	104,913	21.8	34,344	8.4
Finland	155,000	32.2	145,522	35.4
Near East-Africa		•		
Algeria Egypt Gold Coast Iran Israel * Footnotes for Table	68 28,791 11,732 24,604 954 3 follow on	a/ 6.0 2.4 5.1 0.2 p. 8.	1,470 11,897 8,044 <u>c</u> / 13,216 561 <u>b</u> /	0.4 2.9 2.0 3.2 0.1

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Table 3

Soviet Imports from the Free World
1952-53 8/
(Continued)

			Thousand Cur	rrent US \$
	19	952	195	3
	Value	Percent of Total	Value	Percent of Total
Far East				
Ceylon India Japan Malaya Pakistan Australia	501 4,221 153 9,380 15,429 25	0.1 0.9 a/ 2.0 3.2 a/	0 615 <u>b</u> / 7 0 7,353 33,071	0 a/ a/ 0 1.8 8.0
Latin Americ	a.			
Argentina Cuba Mexico	10 3 2 10 3	<u>a/</u> <u>a</u> / <u>a</u> /	0 0 0	0 0 0
Total	480,860	100.0	411,096 <u>a</u> /	100.0

a. Less than one-tenth of 1 percent.

Nevertheless, the impending relaxation of these trade controls, as well as the enthusiasm of businessmen for extending trade with the USSR, do set the stage for increased trade between the nations.

b. January-October only.

c. January-September only.

d. Preliminary figure; includes only partial trade of some countries.

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IV. Soviet Gold.

Aside from the increased talk of imports of consumer goods, several other unusual aspects regarding Soviet trade with the Free World have been noted since mid-1953. Large amounts of Soviet gold, estimated to be over US \$150 million, and smaller amounts of other precious metals were sold on Free World markets largely during the last quarter of 1953. This is over 60 percent larger than the 1950-52 average annual sales of gold of US \$94 million. Sales have continued at a substantial rate during 1954. Soviet sales of petroleum products, manganese ore, and automobiles to the Free World have also increased. Such commodities not only earn foreign exchange but also point up the effort of the USSR to expand trade with the Free World.

A trade deficit of approximately US \$30 million, incurred by the USSR in its trade with the Free World during the first half of 1953, as shown in Tables 3 and 4*, helps explain the large gold exports. Incomplete data for the year 1953 indicate a trade deficit of US \$35 million, which -- balanced against gold exports -- leaves over US \$100 million which could have been used for financing invisibles, clandestine activities, and unrecorded trade and for increasing Soviet balances in Free World banks.

V. Technical Assistance and Loans.

Other aspects of Soviet tactics encountered during the past 10 months have been offers of technical assistance to underdeveloped countries and the actual extension of loans to 3 Free World nations.

Soviet offers of technical assistance were originally made last July at a session of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the UN in Geneva with a qualified offer of 4 million rubles, and later in February 1954 at the tenth meeting of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE) of the UN held in Ceylon. Subsequent events imply that the type of technical assistance planned by the USSR involves the sending of Soviet technicians abroad rather than outright grants of money. The December 1953 Soviet trade agreement with India and the January 1954 agreement with Afghanistan both include aspects of technical assistance, and overtures along the same lines have also been made by the USSR to Egypt.

^{*} Table 4 follows on p. 10.

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Table 4
Soviet Exports to the Free World
1952-53 9/

		<u></u> '	Thousand Cu	rrent US \$
	19	52	195	53
	Value	Percent of Total		Percent of Total
US	16,818	3.6	10,791	2.9
Canada	2 ,3 69	0.5	855	0.2
Europe				
Austria Belgium-Luxembourg Denmark France West Germany Greece Iceland Ireland Italy Netherlands Norway Portugal Sweden Switzerland	105 11,573 11,106 18,089 3,957 0 4 169 34,061 25,610 11,396 10 19,992 2,792	a/* 54.990 a/555 a/7.555 a/4.0	64 16,720 8,435 16,883 15,619 174 1,587 884 9,261 31,262 16,900 1	a/ 4.4 2.2 4.5 4.1 8.4 0.2 2.5 8.3 4.5 a/ 6.1
UK	162,774	3 5.2	111,722	29.6
Finland	81,581	17.6	89,647	2 3. 7
Near East-Africa				
Algeria Anglo-Egyptian Sudan Belgian Congo	0 125 75	0 <u>a</u> / <u>a</u> /	159 390 5 <u>b</u> /	편/ 0.1 ⁸ /

^{*} Footnotes for Table 4 follow on p. 12.

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Table 4
Soviet Exports to the Free World 1952-53 9/ (Continued)

<u></u>			Thousand Cu	rrent US \$
	19	952	1953	3
	Value	Percent of Total	Value	Percent of Total
Near East-Africa (Continued)				
Cyprus Egypt French Morocco Gold Coast Iran Iraq Israel Lebanon Malta South Rhodesia	1 31,131 1 2 23,942 3 39 38 1	a/ .7 a/ a/ a/ a/ a/ a/ a/ a/ a/ a/	0 14,133 0 1 <u>b</u> / 12,825 0 24 <u>c</u> / 28 0 <u>b</u> / <u>d</u> / 0	0 3.7 0 a/ 3.4 0 a/ a/ a/ 0
Far East				
Australia Burma Ceylon Hong Kong India Indonesia Japan Malaya New Zealand Pakistan	1,100 18 263 255 1,768 0 459 9 168 368	0.2 a/ 0.1 0.4 0 0.1 a/ a/ 0.1	1,747 3 <u>e</u> / 14 3 816 <u>c</u> / 74 2,103 10 131 35	0.5 0.4 2.2 0.4 0.8 8.8 8.8 8.8 9.8 9.8 9.8 9.8 9.8 9.8 9

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Table 4

Soviet Exports to the Free World 1952-53 <u>9</u>/ (Continued)

			Thousand Cu	rrent US \$
	19	52	1953	
	Value	Percent of Total	Value	Percent of Total
Latin America				
Colombia Cuba Mexico Peru Venezuela	0 1 41 6 19	0 <u>a/</u> a/ a/ a/	2 0 0 0 14 <u>c</u> /	<u>a/</u> 0 0 a/
	462,258	100.0	377,381 <u>f</u> /	100.0

- a. Less than one-tenth of 1 percent.
- b. January-September only.
- c. January-October only.
- d. Less than US \$500.
- e. January-June only.
- f. Preliminary figure; includes only partial trade for some countries.

In August 1953 the USSR made its first postwar loan to a Free World country in the form of a credit of US \$30 million to Argentina. This was followed by two loans to Afghanistan, a credit of US \$3.5 million in January 1954 and a later credit of US \$600,000. On 6 February 1954 the USSR granted Finland a loan of US \$10 million which, unlike the previous loans, was not for specific Soviet goods but rather for an account from which Finland could draw gold dollars or any other agreed-upon foreign currency. This is apparently the first gold or convertible-currency loan made by the USSR to a non-Bloc country.

Aside from an attempt to woo underdeveloped countries toward the Communist camp, it appears that the technical assistance program of the USSR is basically designed to serve as a propaganda platform,

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particularly at future international meetings, and to enhance the prestige of the USSR both at home and abroad.

The loan agreements fit more closely into the strictly economic aspects of the Soviet trade picture. The Argentine loan may be viewed as a corollary to the signing of the Soviet-Argentine trade agreement, although it could assist the USSR in any planned economic penetration of Latin America. Under the trade agreement, a group of Argentine technicians recently visited the USSR in order to select and inspect capital equipment being purchased there by Argentina. The Soviet loan puts West Germany, the UK, the US, and the USSR all in competition to supply capital goods to Argentina on credit. The Finnish loan agreement is the culmination of a long series of negotiations designed to convert Finland's clearing ruble accounts into a more readily spendable form. Consequently the Soviet loan to Finland is better viewed as a compromise between Finland's desire to convert its ruble balances and the USSR's reluctance to make them convertible. Although the USSR is making propaganda out of this so called "gold loan," the fact that it was made was probably to Finland's advantage.

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APPENDIX

SOURCES

Evaluations, following the classification entry and designated "Eval.," have the following significance:

Source of Information	Information
Doc Documentary A - Completely reliable B - Usually reliable C - Fairly reliable D - Not usually reliable E - Not reliable F - Cannot be judged	 1 - Confirmed by other sources 2 - Probably true 3 - Possibly true 4 - Doubtful 5 - Probably false 6 - Cannot be judged

"Documentary" refers to original documents of foreign governments and organizations; copies or translations of such documents by a staff officer; or information extracted from such documents by a staff officer, all of which may carry the field evaluation "Documentary."

Evaluations not otherwise designated are those appearing on the cited document; those designated "RR" are by the author of this report. No "RR" evaluation is given when the author agrees with the evaluation on the cited document.

- Constructed by CIA from official documents of the Bureau of Foreign Commerce, US Department of Commerce: "Free World Imports from USSR," 1950-52; "Free World Exports from USSR," 1950-52; and "Value Series," 1952-53. C. Eval. RR 1.
- 2. Ibid.
- 3. Weekly Hansard, 22 Mar and 8 Apr 1954. U. Eval. Doc.
- 4. CIA, RR CSM 100, 11 May 1954. C.
- 5. Board of Trade Journal, 6 Mar 1954. U. Eval. RR 1.
- 6. The Financial Times, 30 Apr 1954, London. U. Eval. RR 1.
- 7. Thid.
- 8. The Bureau of Foreign Commerce, US Department of Commerce, op. cit.
- 9. Ibid.



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